

All Saints Church of England VA Primary School, Datchworth

Hollybush Lane, Datchworth, Knebworth, SG3 6RE

Inspection dates 1–2 April 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils get a good start to school life in the Reception class and continue to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school.
- Lessons are lively and interesting. Teachers encourage pupils to try hard in lessons and to do their best.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. Older pupils act as good role models for younger ones, they get on well and look out for each other.
- The school makes good use of its grounds and specialist sports coaches to encourage activities which support a healthy lifestyle.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know how to stay safe in different situations.
- The headteacher checks regularly on the quality of teaching to make sure that it is consistently good so that pupils make good progress.
- Governors are very supportive of the school. They visit often to check how well it is doing. In meetings, they ask challenging questions to hold the headteacher and senior leaders accountable for continued improvement.
- Pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is supported by close links with the church and local community and underpins the caring atmosphere of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in mathematics is not as strong as in reading and writing. Occasionally, work for the most able pupils is too easy.
- Not all teachers give clear guidance as to how pupils can improve their work.
- Some teachers' assessments of the levels pupils are working at are not always accurate.
- Leaders do not analyse achievement data rigorously enough to use it to speed up improvements in their areas of responsibility.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons, six of which were seen together with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other staff, two groups of pupils, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor, and a representative of the local authority.
- Informal discussions were held with parents.
- The inspectors took account of the 31 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, individual communications from parents and the school’s own parental and pupil questionnaires.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and reviewed a range of documentation including the school’s checks on its performance, its analysis and tracking of pupils’ progress, records of behaviour and safety, school improvement plans, records relating to classroom observations and the management of staff performance, safeguarding arrangements and records of meetings of the governing body.
- The inspectors also looked at pupils’ work, listened to pupils read and checked information on attendance.

Inspection team

Susan Hughes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lindsay Alldis

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, have a parent in the armed forces or are in local authority care, is well below average.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been at the school for 23 years and was just about to retire. A new headteacher had been appointed to lead the school from September 2014 and interim leadership arrangements were in place for the summer term.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage leader joined the school the day before the inspection took place.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - work is never too easy for pupils, especially the most able pupils, in mathematics
 - all teachers give clear guidance as to how pupils can improve their work and make sure pupils act on their advice
 - teachers' assessments of the level pupils are working at are consistently accurate.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that all leaders make better use of data analysis to drive improvements in their areas of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children typically start in Reception class with skills broadly expected for their age. Their personal, social and emotional development, and literacy and numeracy skills, however, are not as strong as other skills. As teaching in the Reception class has improved over recent years, children are making increasingly good progress. In 2013, the proportion of children who had achieved a good level of development was above average.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1. The results of the most recent national screening check at the end of Year 1 on how well pupils know phonics (the sounds that letters represent in words) were above average. Pupils use these skills to read unfamiliar words and to help with their writing. While standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 are still broadly average, there has been a steady rise over recent years, showing good progress from previously lower starting points.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2, particularly in reading and writing. In 2013, standards in reading and English punctuation, spelling and grammar at the end of the Key Stage were well above average, while standards in writing and mathematics were above average. Most pupils currently in Year 6 are working above the level expected for their age in all subjects.
- As the number of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is so small, their progress cannot be reported without the risk of them being identified. However, they are well supported throughout the school and, in some cases, make better progress than other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make particularly good progress. They are supported effectively by skilled adults within the classroom and, occasionally, in small groups or individually as needed.
- The most able pupils generally make good progress because teachers have high expectations of what they can do most of the time. Occasionally, however, their progress in lessons, particularly in mathematics, is not as fast as it could be.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good because teachers know their pupils well and ask questions which not only check understanding, but help develop ideas and learning. For example, teachers expect pupils to fully explain their answers and will often follow a question with more probing ones so that pupils have to think carefully, creating deeper understanding.
- Strong relationships between adults and pupils mean that they feel comfortable to 'have a go' at difficult tasks. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning are reflected in their understanding that they can learn from mistakes. Pupils told the inspectors that teachers are always there to help them and encourage them to do well.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well. Much of the support is in lessons where sensitive adults help pupils to work alongside others in the class. On occasions, pupils work with additional adults outside the classroom in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. Pupils' specific needs are checked regularly so that support can be changed as their needs change.

- Pupils benefit from the use of specialist coaches for physical education and make good progress with learning sporting skills. Coaches, funded by the primary sports funding, run successful lunchtime and after-school clubs as well as teaching lessons.
- Teachers use their particular areas of expertise such as music and French, to good effect across the school. They also develop literacy and numeracy skills well in different subjects. For example, during a French lesson in Year 4, the use of correct grammatical terms such as 'plural' and 'preposition', consolidated pupils' understanding of these words both in French and English. Meanwhile, in a music lesson, pupils in Year 5 improved their literacy skills as they read and responded to a poem, both verbally and through music.
- Children get a good start in the Reception class. A wide range of activities, both indoors and outside, develops their skills well. They have opportunities to work with adults in small groups and to practise their skills through playing together and sharing toys and equipment. During the inspection, children showed how well they understood the Easter story by ordering the main events and writing their own versions.
- In most lessons, teachers make sure that pupils of all abilities are given work which helps them learn well. On occasions, however, especially in mathematics lessons, the most able pupils have to complete work that is too easy for them before they are able to move on to more challenging work which introduces new learning.
- While all teachers know the next steps pupils need to take to make good progress, some do not accurately assess and record the level pupils are working at. Some teachers give pupils clear guidance as to what they need to do to improve, and make sure they follow the advice. However, guidance is not as helpful in some classes as in others.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are pleasant and polite. They eagerly hold doors open and offer help to visitors. They are friendly and helpful to each other and told inspectors that they had friends who are always there for them in school.
- Pupils of all ages play well together, and 'playground friends' look out for anyone who looks upset or is sitting on the 'buddy bench'. Pupils say the buddying system, where older pupils look after younger ones, works well and they take their responsibilities very seriously. Parents told the inspectors how this system helped their children settle in when they start school.
- Pupils understand what bullying is and the different forms it can take, including physical, verbal and cyber-bullying. They say there is very little bullying in the school and any incidents of unkindness are quickly sorted out by adults.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Leaders ensure that access to the building is secure and staff are rigorously checked prior to appointment. Pupils say they feel safe in school and have learnt how to keep safe on the roads and when using the internet. During the inspection, for example, pupils in Year 6 were undertaking cycling proficiency training.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their lessons. They say that the teachers' positive comments and rewards make them want to do well. Even if, on occasions, the work is too easy for them and they lose focus, pupils do not disrupt others' learning.

- The school works closely with parents to make sure their children attend school regularly and are punctual. As a result, attendance has risen steadily over the last three years and is above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The school is led well by the headteacher and her senior leaders. The headteacher rigorously checks the quality of teaching and keeps a record of how well pupils are doing so that she can identify any who need help to keep up and discuss this with their teachers. A new computer tracking system has recently been installed to support this process, but not all leaders are confident in using this. Consequently, the school data are not used as rigorously and effectively as they could be.
- Subject leaders understand how to improve achievement in their areas and how to make it happen. For example, a focus on improving reading last year resulted in a rise in standards. Leaders are starting to use progress data more effectively to help check how rapidly new ways of teaching are making a difference to pupils' learning. However, they are not yet all proficient in analysing the data.
- The appraisal system for checking teachers' performance, introduced last year, contributes to the good teaching across the school. Individual targets are used by the headteacher and the governing body to measure whether pay rises and promotion are justified by results. Teachers and other adults have good training opportunities to develop and refine their skills.
- Good partnership working with local schools supports staff development, and teachers share good ideas and practice. The partnerships also provide opportunities for pupils to work together, including taking part in competitive sports and dance and music festivals.
- Some of the new primary sports funding has been spent on joining a sports consortium. This provides a wider range of sporting activities such as cross-country running and gymnastics. Additional coaches also run clubs and take lessons. The remaining funding supplements the cost of clubs and the purchase of equipment.
- Subjects are taught in an interesting and exciting way. Pupils enjoy trips related to their topic work which, they say, bring their learning to life. For example, pupils went to the Imperial War Museum at Duxford in connection with their study of the Second World War. Visitors to the school, such as a recent poet, also inspire pupils to learn and achieve well. Pupils wrote high-quality poems, including 'urban haiku', as a result of the visit.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social education is particularly strong. Close links with the church develop spirituality, not only in acts of worship, but in the relationships and respect pupils show each other. Music plays an important part in school life; pupils sing well and a large proportion of pupils learn to play a musical instrument. The school promotes equality of opportunity to make sure that all pupils achieve equally well.
- The local authority has provided good support for the school. This includes regular visits to the school, support for governors in appointing a new headteacher, and help with installing and learning about the new data tracking system.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very supportive of the school. They visit regularly and, in meetings, ask challenging questions of the headteacher and senior leaders to understand how well the

school is doing and how it can be even better. Finances are managed well. Governors have tackled challenging situations to ensure that the school spends wisely. They know that the pupil premium is helping eligible pupils to achieve well and understand how the new primary school sports funding is used to extend physical education opportunities.

- Governors know that teaching is good and appreciate how the new appraisal system has contributed to this. They make sure that teachers' pay rises are linked to the progress their pupils make. The governors have appointed a new headteacher to lead the school from September 2014 and put appropriate arrangements in place for school leadership during the summer term.
- Governors have made sure that national requirements for safeguarding and child protection are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	117430
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	439572

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Viv Marshall
Headteacher	Mary Willatt
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2009
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